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ACTION ARA-16

INFO	OCT-00	ADS-00	AID-07	INR-10	EUR-12	SS-10	OPR-02
	CIAE-00	EB-08	DODE-00	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	COME-00
	SSO-00	SY-05	HA-06	L-03	LAB-04	TRSE-00	PM-09
	PA-01	CCO-00	STR-13	SIL-01	INRE-00	ANAE-00	A-02
	ICAE-00	SYE-00	SP-02	OC-06	SR-04	SPRS-02	/124 W

-----142043 311717Z /40

O 311611Z MAR 82
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2960
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 1835

CINCSO FOR INTAFF

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

E.O. 12065: GDS 3/31/88 (KEANE, JOHN F.) OR-P
TAGS: ELAB, ASEC, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: GOA CRUSHES CGT DEMONSTRATIONS

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1815

1. [REDACTED] SUMMARY: WITH AN MASSIVE DISPLAY OF FORCE
THE GOVERNMENT FRUSTRATED SCHEDULED RALLIES BY THE
GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (CGT) AND CRUSHED A
SERIES OF RELATED DEMONSTRATIONS. THE MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR ANNOUNCED THAT 400 PERSONS WERE DETAINED,
AS OF 8:00 PM ON MARCH 30, BUT CONSERVATIVE PRESS
ESTIMATES ARE THAT THE TOTAL NUMBER DETAINED EXCEED
1,000. THE INTERIOR MINISTRY SAID THAT THOSE

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DETAINED WOULD BE RELEASED ONCE THEY ARE IDENTIFIED.
SEVERAL PEOPLE REPORTEDLY WERE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY GUNSHOT AT

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DI STURBANCES IN MENDOZA. THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT CLAIMING THAT THE POPULATION "DID NOT SUPPORT" THE PROTEST, BUT WE THINK THIS IS A MIS-LEADING INTERPRETATION OF WHAT HAPPENED. MOREOVER, WE THINK THE GOA WAS TARNISHED BY THE EXCESSIVE ZEAL OF ITS POLICE. THE FACT THAT THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATIONS IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT CITIES MAY ENCOURAGE LOABOR TO TRY IT AGAIN. IF REPORTS CIRCULATING MORNING OF MARCH 31 THAT THERE WAS ONE OR MORE DEATHS IN THE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE CORRECT, THERE COULD BE ADDITIONAL DISTURBANCES SOON. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE SECURITY FORCES USED A MAJOR SHOW OF STRENGTH AND OFTEN EXCESSIVE FORCE TO PREVENT RALLIES AND DISPERSE DEMONSTRATORS IN THE CITIES OF BUENOS AIRES, MENDOZA, TUCUMAN, CORDOBA AND ROSARIO ON MARCH 30. BETWEEN 1,000 AND 2,000 PEOPLE WERE DETAINED, ACCORDING TO SEVERAL ESTIMATES, INCLUDING SOME OF THE CGT LEADERSHIP A NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS, AND LEONARDO PEREZ ESQUIVEL, SON OF NOBEL PRIZE WINNER PEREZ ESQUIVEL. HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS HAVE DEMANDED THE RELEASE OF ALL DETAINEES. A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN INJURED. IN BUENOS AIRES, SOME PEOPLE WERE SHOT WITH RUBBER BULLETS FROM CLOSE RANGE, SUSTAINING WOUNDS, ANE PERSON WAS RUN OVER BY A POLICE CAR. IN THE CITY OF MENDOZA, SEVERAL PERSONS WERE REPORTEDLY INJURED INCLUDING SOME SERIOUSLY WOUNDED BY GUNSHOT, AT DISTURBANCES. AS LEAST ONE OF THE INJURED IS REPORTED IN SERIOUS CONDITION AND THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT HE DIED LAST NIGHT. THE GOVERNMENT LAMENTED

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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THE OCCURRENCE, BLAMED IT ON "INTEMPERANCE". AND SAID IT WAS BEING INVESTIGATED. THE GOVERNON OF MENDOZA PROVINCE, BONIFACIO CEJUELA, IS RUMORED TO HAVE SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION.

3. (U) IN BUENOS AIRES, THE PLAZA DE MAYO WAS CORDONED OFF IN EVERY DIRECTION AND SUBWAYS AND ROAD TRANSPORT WERE INTERRUPTED IN A 12 SQ. BLOCK AREA NEAR THE PLAZA. MOST STORES AND OFFICES WERE CLOSED. A DOZEN OR MORE POLICEMEN WERE STATIONED ON EVERY CORNER DOWNTOWN, WHILE ON THE KEY ARTERIES SUCH AS 9TH OF JULY AVENUE, THEY WERE BACKED UP BY FALANXES OF HORSE-

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MOUNTED POLICE, WATER CANNON, AND SCORES OF LARGE, ARMORED POLICE VANS WHICH CRUISED CONTINUOUSLY DISPERSING PEOPLE WITH TEAR GAS.

4. (U) PEOPLE MILLING IN THE STREETS NOT FAR FROM THE PLAZO DE MAYO DID NOT APPEAR TO EMBOFFS TO BE PREDOMINANTLY THOSE ONE WOULD EXPECT AT A CGT RALLY.

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2961
INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY
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THE MIX SEEMED TO BE THE NORMAL ONE FOUND DOWNTOWN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EVENING RUSH HOUR -- BUSINESSMEN, STORE EMPLOYEES, PUBLIC SERVANTS, SHOPPERS, LOCAL RESIDENTS, BLUE COLLAR WORKERS, STUDENTS AND CURIOUS ONLOOKERS AND THRILL-SEEKERS. THERE WERE EVEN A FAIR NUMBER OF SENIOR CITIZENS WHO SAID THEY WERE THERE TO PROTEST THEIR STRAIGHTENED CIRCUMSTANCES DERIVING FROM CURRENT ECONOMIC POLICY.

5. (U) AS PEOPLE STOOD AROUND IN SMALL BUNCHES AT STREET CORNERS OR IN PARKS, A FEW INDIVIDUALS SPREAD LEAFLETS, MOSTLY PERONIST, SANG PERONIST MARCHES OR SHOUTED SLOGANS SUCH AS "PEACE, BREAD AND WORK," THE POLICE CHARGED THESE GROUPS OR DISPERSED THEM WITH TEAR GAS. POLICE ZEAL EXCEED THEIR JUDGEMENT, AND THEY OFTEN TURNED A RATHER INDIFFERENT GATHERING OF BYSTANDERS INTO A

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HOSTILE CROWD.

6. (U) NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, PERONISTS AND OTHER
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE DENOUNCED THE POLICE REPRESSION.
THE FIVE-PARTY "MULTIPARTIDARIA" DECLARED THAT "THE
CITY APPEARS TO BE UNDER SIEGE AND OCCUPIED BY POLICE
FORCES."

7. [REDACTED] COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT PREVENTED
MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS AND PERHAPS AVERTED GREATER
VIOLENCE THAN THAT WHICH OCCURRED, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE
ENORMOUS DISPLAY OF FORCE AND HARSH REPRESSION WERE
ONLY PARTIALLY EFWBPYFECTIVE, AND APPARENTLY COUNTER-
PRODUCTIVE. YESTERDAY'S EVENTS SUGGEST THAT THE
RALLIES, AT LEAST THE ONE IN BUENOS AIRES, WOULD
HAVE DRAWN A RESPECTABLE CROWD, HAD THE GOVERNMENT NOT INTER-
FERED. THE REPRESSION PROBABLY TURNED MANY WHO WERE
INDIFFERENT INTO HOSTILITY TOWARD THE GOA. THUS,
THE CGT GARNERED SYMPATHETIC PUBLICITY AND PROBABLY
GAINED GROUND ON THE CNT-20 LABOR CONFEDERATION IN
THEIR COMPETITION FOR ARGENTINE AND INTERNATIONAL
LABOR SUPPORT. WITHIN THE CGT, HOWEVER, THE
RELATIVELY HARD-LINERS ARE IN A STRONGER POSITION NOW.
THE CGT MAY ALSO THINK IT IS IN A BETTER BARGAINING
POSITION WITH THE GOVERNMENT, NOT ONLY ON ECONOMIC
POLICY BUT ON THEIR BREAD-AND-BUTTER ISSUES, THE
PACE AND FORM OF TRADE UNION NORMALIZATION AND THE
FATE OF TRADE UNION CONTROL OF ITS SOCIAL PROJECTS,
THE UNIONS' PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF INCOME.

8. [REDACTED] POLICE VIOLENCE HAS TARNISHED THE GOVERN-
MENT AND, IF IT TURNS OUT THAT ONE OR MORE
DEMONSTRATORS WAS KILLED, OR DIES SUBSEQUENTLY OF
WOUNDS AS A RESULT OF POLICE REPRESSION, THERE MAY
BE MORE TROUBLE SOON. IN ANY EVENT,
THE CGT AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITH GRIEVANCES
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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MAY BE ENCOURAGED BY THE TURNOUT AND THE GOA'S

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ANNOUNCED INTENTION TO RELEASE DETAINED PERSONS
QUICKLY. WE BEGIN TO SEE MORE LABOR AND OTHER
SOCIAL STRIFE. AT A MINIMUM, WE SONDER IF THE DEMONSTRATORS
AND POLICE EXCESSES MAY HAVE SHORTENED THE PERIOD FOR THE
ARMED FORCES ECONOMIC CZAR ROBERTO ALEMANN'S AUSTERITY
PROGRAM TO SHOW RESULTS. SHLAUDEMAN

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